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Author's Note

Author's Note

Who remembers the two Crazystar books and the Super Edition based upon those books? This picks up after Crazystar's Greatest Challenge and has minor spoilers for Salmonstar's Fate so you should probably read those first but if not it's ok. I'm just glad you're reading! This is going to be about a great threat to the RiverClan that forces Pebblestar(one of Salmonstar's kits) to make a difficult choice. Read on to learn more! :D

Allegiances

Allegiances

RIVERCLAN

Leader

Pebblestar

Deputy

Minnowsteam

Medicine Cat

Tigerstep

Apprentice, Thistletail

Warriors

Willowstorm

Birdwing

Troutleap

Briarstorm

Streamwhisker

Dusktail

Lionpelt

Leafclaw

Antstorm

Vineleaf

Silvershade

Volefur

Dawnheart

Roseflower

Reedstream

Apprentices

Ratpaw

Littlepaw

Deerpaw

Queens

Goldenshine(Nursing Antstorm’s kits: Emberkit and Crowkit)

Elders

Cherrystorm

Sunblaze

Ripplepool

Prologue

Prologue

Pebblefur stared in dismay at his dying leader. Leaf-bare had struck RiverClan hard, with greencough already being the cause of many deaths. “Tawnystar, no!” he wailed. “I’m not ready to be Pebblestar!”

The flame-colored she-cat opened her mouth to speak but another fit of coughing passed through her body. “You’ve been a faithful deputy. I trust you to lead my Clan well.”

Pebblefur nodded, trying to regain control of his emotions. “I’ll do my best.”

Tawnystar didn’t reply. The light slowly faded out of her eyes and Pebblefur moaned with grief, burying his head in her fur. He heard Tigerstep approaching. “Pebblefur, we must leave,” she meowed gently. “You need to receive your nine lives at the Moonpool.”

***

Salmonstar stepped back and Pebblestar breathed in her scent one final time. The StarClan cats were chanting his new name. But suddenly, the scene changed.

Pebblestar was standing on a branch of the RiverTree in the RiverClan camp. But none of his Clanmates were there. Then, he heard a dreadful roaring sound. It grew steadily louder until it was unbearable. It abruptly faded to be replaced by Salmonstar’s voice. “Horses’ territory will part the great river in two.”

Confused, Pebblestar awoke by the Moonpool.

***

Six moons passed and Pebblestar pushed the ominous

prophecy to the back of his mind. He was sharing a fish with his sister and deputy, Minnowstream, when Troutleap yowled, “I hear this strange growling noise!”

The camp fell silent and Pebblestar listened intently. He leapt to his paws, heart pounding with fear. It was what he’d heard in his dream after the naming ceremony! He scrambled up onto the RiverTree and saw a herd of gigantic yellow monsters racing towards them. “RiverClan, leave the camp! Head for the Fallen Oak! Warriors, help the kits and elders and leave no cat behind!”

The monsters’ paws tore up the earth behind them wherever they touched. Pebblestar raced towards the nursery, grabbing one of Goldenshine’s kits in his jaws. The queen gave him a grateful look before reaching for her other kit.

Pebblestar leapt into the river and swiftly swam across before following the trail to the Fallen Oak. After waiting awhile, he gathered his Clan to make sure that every cat was accounted for. Fortunately, each of his Clanmates seemed to have safely escaped.

At sunrise the next day, after a night of little sleep, Pebblestar left to investigate the danger. He returned with the worst possible news. “RiverClan, the monsters have already uprooted the RiverTree, destroyed our dens, and they appear to be filling in the stream surrounding the camp. I…I think they’re trying to expand horse-place.”

Terrified chattering broke out throughout the crowd. Pebblestar signaled with his tail for silence. The noise quieted but as the RiverClan leader was about to speak, Dusktail cried, “What are we going to do about it?”

Pebblestar took a deep breath and tried to look confident for the sake of his Clan. “Without the river, our territory can no longer sustain all of us. Some of you must leave!”

A/N: What do you think will happen next! :D Thanks for reading, hope you enjoyed, and please comment!

Chapter 1

Chapter 1

Minnowstream stared in shock at her brother.

“What?”

“Where will we go?”

“This is RiverClan’s home! We mustn’t abandon it!”

“Silence!” Pebblestar screeched.

Every voice quieted except for one. “What if we don’t want to leave?” Cherrystorm, the oldest, and the grumpiest, elder hissed.

Pebblestar glared at her. “I will stay behind with those who wish to remain here. The rest of you will leave for a place Tawnystar said my mother stayed as a kit. You will be lead by Minnowstream, if she accepts, of course.”

All heads snapped towards the RiverClan deputy, who shifted uncomfortably on her paws. She pictured the rushing river, the beautiful camp, and the peaceful lake. *This is my home.*

Then she recalled the roaring of the ferocious monsters, and the words of her brother describing the destruction of the camp. *But my home is gone now…*

Minnowstream lifted her head and met her brother’s eyes. “I am willing to lead my Clan to a safer home as long as I am given directions to this place you speak about.”

Pebblestar dipped his head, relief sparkling in his clear blue gaze. “Thank you. Now, you must make your decision to leave or stay by tomorrow at sunrise. In making your decision, remember that it’ll more than likely be safer to go with Minnowstream, as

there'll be a stream in her territory. Anyhow, we needn't worry about border patrols, only for today. Hunting is of more importance, since we can't use the river and we have many mouths to feed. Willowstorm, will you organize the patrols? I need to speak with Minnowstream."

Minnowstream waited as the RiverClan leader padded over to her. "The place Salmonstar stayed is far away from here," Pebblestar warned. "You'd have to travel through horse-place and cross the first Thunderpath you see. When you reach the second one, head towards the right and follow it until you reach a forest. Stay there for the night and then continue on. You'll reach a Twolegplace and have to ask some worthless kittypet for directions to a valley with a stream."

Minnowstream nodded. "And what do we do once we arrive?"

"The valley would make a good camp, since it has a river in it. One side faces Twolegplace while the rest of it is surrounded by forest. You can claim some of the forest as your land," Pebblestar replied.

***

The next morning came quickly. Minnowstream was starving. Despite the fact that every warrior had left on a hunting patrol, they'd only returned with a scrawny shrew and two mice. She'd chosen not to eat, deciding that the rest of the Clan needed it more. A half-eaten rabbit laid in the center of camp and as the tempting aroma wafted over to her, she could barely resist.

Minnowstream shook her head and tried to push her hunger to the back of her mind. She looked around at her home one final time and then walked over to sit beside Pebblestar. "What is RiverClan going to do when we're gone? You have no camp and no river, so you'll have to hunt land prey. And the monsters may come closer…"

Pebblestar gave her a weary look. "I believe you have your own problems to worry about," he murmured. "Neither path

will be easy. It will be difficult to settle the Clan in a different place."

Before Minnowstream could respond, Pebblestar leapt to his paws and summoned the Clan. "The cats who are staying here, stand up!" he yowled. "If you wish to travel with Minnowstream, remain seated."

Minnowstream scanned the cats. To no one's surprise, all of the elders stood with Tigerstep on her feet beside them. Briarstorm, one of the Clan's senior warriors, was also staying. The only other cats that had made the decision of trying to survive on the last bits of RiverClan territory were Vineleaf, Lionpelt, Leafclaw, and Silvershade. Minnowstream felt a ripple of unease pass through the Clan. Of the small group that had chosen to continue life by the lake, almost half were elders. And although Tigerstep was an efficient medicine cat, she wouldn't contribute much, if anything, to the fresh-kill pile.

Reedstream looked hurt when he noticed Silvershade standing. "Why aren't you coming with us? Don't you want to be with me?"

"Of course I do!" Silvershade purred. "But I can't come on such a long, perilous journey because Reedstream, I'm expecting your kits!"

Reedstream's face brightened. "I'll stay with you! Our kits will be beautiful! But…Minnowstream, can we come join you later if we want to, once our kits are old enough?"

Minnowstream nodded. "Of course!"

"Goldenshine, are you sure you wish to go with Minnowstream and the traveling cats?" Pebblestar asked. "After all, you have kits!"

"Yes," the she-cat replied. "My kits are only a half-moon away from being apprenticed. They can walk for most of the way and if necessary, I think they're still small enough to be carried for a short amount of time."

Pebblestar sighed. “Is everybody certain that this is the path you wish to take?”

“No!” a high-pitched voice, belonging to Deerpaw, wailed. “I’m sorry Littlepaw, Ratpaw, but I can’t leave RiverClan!”

Littlepaw and Ratpaw sorrowfully said good-bye to their sister and went to join the cats who were waiting at one side of the clearing.

Minnowstream hurried over to Pebblestar and touched noses with him one last time. “May StarClan light your path.”

A lifetime’s worth of regret glistened in her brother’s eyes. “And yours.”

As Minnowstream trotted over to the cats she was now in charge of, she was met by Thistletail. “Minnowstream, in case you didn’t notice at the meeting, I will be accompanying you to the valley,” the russet tom meowed. “The Clan will need a medicine cat.”

Minnowstream dipped her head respectfully to the medicine cat, who had been Tigerstep’s apprentice. “Thank you.”

And so the journey began. As they neared the place that had once been their camp, Minnowstream cast one last glance over her shoulder. She saw Pebblestar, who was staring dejectedly at the ground, looking utterly defeated.

A/N: Minnowstream is officially leaving the camp! This story is going to be in her POV, it was only Pebblestar POV for the prologue.

Anyhow thanks for reading and please share your thoughts with me!

Chapter 2

Chapter 2

Minnowstream forced herself to keep walking. Her Clanmates followed behind, except for Ratpaw and Littlepaw, who raced ahead. “Come back!” the silver she-cat shouted. “We don’t know how close the monsters are!”

Minnowstream did quicken the pace though. She wanted to reach the forest by sunrise tomorrow, which probably would require them to speed up.

Minnowstream stared in horror as the monsters appeared at the edge of her vision. It was just as Pebblestar had said, except worse. The RiverTree laid on its side in the middle of camp and the bramble thickets and thorn bushes that made up each den except the warriors den had been tossed on top of it. Speaking of the warriors den, the stone wall at one end of the island had been crushed by the monsters’ mighty paws. Now, all that was left of it was a pile of fragments of rock.

Minnowstream watched helplessly as a monster scooped up some soil with its forepaws and carried it over to the stream. *They are trying to get rid of the stream! But why? WHY DO THEIR DUMB HORSES NEED MORE LAND!!!*

“Keep walking, but be cautious and quiet!” Minnowstream hissed.

The Clan crept onward stealthily, passing through what was left of the stream. It was once a river of great depth, but now it was shallow enough for even Goldenshine’s kits to wade through. The cats continued on through the terrain, with seemed strange and foreign.

Suddenly, a monster noticed them and spun around with a terrifying snarl, propelling itself towards the frightened cats. The

Clan dashed in different directions, diving out of the monster's path. Fur spiked with fear, Minnowstream leapt to her right, narrowly avoiding being flattened by the beast.

The silver furred she-cat crouched there, trembling uncontrollably. The monster vanished into the distance. Trying to regain her composure, Minnowstream straightened up and managed to shout shakily, "RiverClan, gather around and should something like this happen again, don't panic! That only makes the situation worse."

Eyes glittering nervously, the cats hesitantly padded towards Minnowstream. She carefully scanned the crowd.

Willowstorm pushed her way through the crowd and sat down beside her sister. Her posture was calm and she casually licked a forepaw, as if nothing had happened. Only her eyes betrayed the fact that she was as startled as the rest of them. "Have you seen Thistletail?"

I knew we were missing someone! This is a catastrophe! We can't afford to lose our medicine cat!

Minnowstream desperately looked around, hoping to spot the medicine cat. She glanced back in the direction of the old RiverClan camp and saw a reddish-brown tom leisurely making his way towards them. She guessed he had just left the island, judging by the distance between him and the rest of the cats.

When he finally arrived, Minnowstream shoved her nose in his face. "Where have you been?" she demanded furiously.

The silver she-cat wasn't prepared for the sight that greeted her. Thistletail looked up. His eyes held a shattered look, their usual confident gleam nowhere to be seen. His tail drooped miserably. "I couldn't bring myself to leave the camp! It's destroyed! Everything we ever worked for…utterly demolished!"

Minnowstream tried to reply, but her voice faltered. She made another attempt. "We'll find a new home."

Thistletail bowed his head as if ashamed. “We didn’t even try to defend our old one! We were ordered to flee! It’s cowardly and cannot be StarClan’s will!”

Minnowstream didn’t know what to say. Instead, she turned to the Clan, who were just starting to get suspicious. “Let’s continue on towards horse-place!”

The medicine cat fell in beside her. Minnowstream glanced sideways. “Thistletail, it wouldn’t have been StarClan’s will for us to fight a battle we would never win,” she growled. “They will guide wherever we go.”

Thistletail didn’t respond. Instead, he stared blankly out at the horizon and Minnowstream wondered if he’d even heard her.

The Clan continued on for a while. Finally, the massive Twoleg structures of horse-place materialized in the distance. Strangely, Minnowstream felt more comfortable in the maze of Twoleg animal lands than what used to be her own territory.

Thistletail abruptly paused and gazed at her, eyes clouded with sorrow. “I hope you’re right,” he murmured. “But I fear that Pebblestar’s decision may mean the death of us all.”

Minnowstream couldn’t take it any longer. She whipped around and glowered at the medicine cat. “Why must you be so pessimistic? You didn’t use to be like this!”

Thistletail narrowed his eyes. “You don’t understand! StarClan sent me a sign! I saw a river, but the river...it was flowing with blood. And a voice whispered, ‘Before the moon rises in the sky tonight, the cats of the journey will witness death.’ At best, one cat or a few cats will be with StarClan by this evening. At worst, our whole Clan will be wiped out!”

A/N: YAY! Another cliffhanger! :) *Dramatic suspense music starts playing*

Anyhow, what do you think is going to happen? Hope you enjoyed and can't wait to hear your thoughts! :D

Chapter 3

Chapter 3

Despite Thistletail's warning, nothing disastrous occurred in horse-place. They spotted a dog but steered clear of it. No Twolegs were seen. None of the rogue cats living in the barns attacked, although there was a close call. A fierce black-and-white tom with a nasty scar across the right side of his face stopped them and wanted to have the other cats attack but with Willowstorm's assistance, they were able to persuade them that were only passing through and meant no harm.

The traveling cats squeezed under yet another fence and found themselves in the midst of a bunch of animals that were like white fluffy clouds with legs. When they reached the other side, it was no longer a wooden fence with gaps in between each bar but a wall woven from strands of a shiny silver material. Fortunately, it was short enough to jump over.

Minnowstream took a massive leap and was able to get a decent grip. She remained perched on top of the fence to help the others get over.

Goldenshine grabbed one kit and craned her neck upwards to pass it to Minnowstream before retrieving Emberkit. The silver-furred she-cat gently placed Crowkit on the fence beside her and wrapped her tail around the dark gray kit to make sure he wouldn't fall. She then took Emberkit from Goldenshine, who immediately sprang up onto the fence after Minnowstream's teeth had met the kit's scruff.

The sound of a dog's bark traveled across the field. The sheep ran around in a panic with the dog snapping at their heels. The cats that still remained in the field hurriedly jumped onto the fence to avoid being trampled under the terrified sheep's hooves.

Minnowstream felt the fence wobble slightly beneath her

paws and warmth against her side. She looked over to see Streamwhisker and she leaned into him gratefully, purring loudly. “Thank you for coming with us,” she whispered.

“Thanks for what?” the tom chuckled. “How could you think I’d ever even consider staying behind since you were leaving?”

Streamwhisker gracefully leapt down and Minnowstream was about to follow. But suddenly, Roseflower slipped and the silver she-cat swiftly reached down to haul her back up.

Roseflower nodded with gratitude, eyes still wide from terror. *We are lucky not to have lost any cats so far.*

They didn’t go far before they saw a strip of rough gray stone, appearing to stretch endlessly in both directions. Minnowstream had never seen a Thunderpath before now but she’d heard many dreadful things about them in the elders’ tales as a kit. There was no sign of the infamous monsters but she decided to be cautious anyhow. “Don’t go until I tell you to!” she ordered.

Minnowstream looked twice in both directions and warily stepped onto Thunderpath. Nothing happened. The stone was scorching hot though and burned her paws, so she stepped back onto the grass at its edge. *Let me check one last time and then we can cross…*

Minnowstream looked to her right and saw a distant shape rapidly approaching. Straining her ears, she heard a soft sound and imagined the deafening roar once it was close. “What are we waiting for?” she heard Ratpaw whisper to Littlepaw. “Let’s go!”

The two apprentices dashed out onto the Thunderpath. “No!” Minnowstream screeched. “Littlepaw, Ratpaw, get back here!”

The pale light of sunset faintly glinted against the monster’s unnatural pelt. Blinding light shone from its eyes and the brothers, panicking, tried to run faster. Although smaller than the monsters at RiverClan’s camp, it was still much larger than cats and

its rotating black forepaws could easily crush the apprentices. It was also much quicker as well.

Minnowstream nearly gagged on its stench and the ground began to shake beneath her paws. She sank her claws into the ground and stared in horror at the two apprentices, who had no chance of outrunning the monster. Ratpaw leapt at Littlepaw, who tumbled safely out of the way into the bushes on the other side. His brother was less fortunate though. He crashed onto the Thunderpath, still directly in the monster's path.

Minnowstream closed her eyes unable to watch. There was sickening wail from Ratpaw that made her blood run cold. She cringed at the sound.

The she-cat hesitantly opened her eyes. Ratpaw's body laid lifeless on the Thunderpath and Littlepaw let out a cry of grief and regret.

Minnowstream was too stunned to feel anything but surprise. She half-heartedly gave a brief glance in both directions before racing across the Thunderpath. The Clan numbly followed their leader as she dragged Ratpaw's body to the other side.

As the warriors hastily buried Ratpaw's body, Minnowstream's doubts that she pushed to the back of her mind resurfaced. *First my Clan is scattered in the field with the yellow monsters, then we make a narrow escape from the dog and the sheep in horse-place, and now Ratpaw has been killed on the Thunderpath. What if StarClan doesn't approve of this journey? Perhaps Thistletail was right. Although they spoke nothing of it and this seems to be the death we will witness, what if there will be more casualties before our arrival at our new home? Or maybe StarClan does support this journey but they do not wish for me to be the leader?*

A/N: This is almost exactly the same route as Salmonkit took in Salmonstar's Fate but I plan to be more descriptive with more action. Hope you enjoyed and please tell me your thoughts! :D

Chapter 4

Chapter 4

A shadow of grief hung over the cats. The somber look on their faces revealed that to Minnowstream. She kept a close eye on Littlepaw, who was lagging behind at the back of the group. The once talkative and energetic apprentice now seemed dejected and miserable. He hadn't spoken at all since Ratpaw's tragic death.

They trekked on with little chatter, glancing warily at the Thunderpath, as if they expected one of the monsters to veer off of it and race towards them.

The rough gray trail stretched on for countless tail-lengths, its various twists and turns only making the journey longer. Shortly after they began following the Thunderpath, Goldenshine's kits were complaining about the wearisome adventure. Hearing the queen call her name, Minnowstream swished her tail as a signal to halt and turned to face the golden-furred she-cat with frustration. "My kits are tired and hungry," the queen meowed.

The queen's word reminded Minnowstream of her hunger. "So are the rest of us. Tell your kits to grow up and deal with it!"

Goldenshine raised her head defiantly. "They're only kits," she insisted. "We need to give them some fresh-kill and then stop for a rest."

Minnowstream bared her teeth and shoved her nose in Goldenshine's face. "If your kits can't keep up, then stay here by yourself because we aren't stopping! Pebblestar was right; you shouldn't have come with us! Your kits have done nothing except slow us down!"

Crowkit and Emberkit stared at the silver she-cat with wide, frightened eyes. "Sorry, Minnowstream," Emberkit whispered.

“We…we can keep walking.”

Crowkit lifted his chin and stubborn determination sparked in his eyes. “Yes we most certainly can! We’re almost apprentices after all!”

Minnowstream sighed and shook her head. “No, you’re still kits. I imagine you’ve long since been exhausted. I’m afraid I can’t provide food but Streamwhisker can carry one of you. Goldenshine, you take the other.”

Her mate, a gorgeous dark gray tom, hurried forward and gently grabbed Emberkit by the scruff. “Thank you, Minnowstream,” Goldenshine purred.

Minnowstream ordered the Clan to resume walking. “I apologize for being so short-tempered. It’s j-just…you know, Ratpaw…”

Goldenshine nodded with understanding. “First Deerpaw stayed behind and then Ratpaw was slaughtered by the monster. If anything like that happened to Crowkit or Emberkit, I’d be in a much worse mood than you are now.”

“My Clan needs me,” the silver she-cat sighed dejectedly. “I cannot afford to be depressed in such dire times.”

Every pawstep grew harder as they continued traveling through the dark hours of the night. The Thunderpath became less active with only a rare monster passing by. Minnowstream began to wonder if the stone trail stretched on forever and if they would ever reach the forest.

Soon, the kits weren’t the only ones complaining of exhaustion. Finally as the first rays of dawn sunlight seeped over the horizon, the forest appeared in the distance. Minnowstream had never been a fan of trees but they looked nicer now than the river did after a long border patrol. They stumbled wearily into the woods and quickly found a small clearing. It wouldn’t have been large enough for ThunderClan, WindClan, or ShadowClan so perhaps it was a blessing that the traveling cats were such a small

group. The warriors collapsed gratefully onto the leafy ground. Minnowstream curled up at the base of an oak tree and closed her eyes but Willowstorm prodded her in the side with a paw. “We are all tired and hungry,” her sister meowed. “I will go hunting and Dusktail has agreed to go with me.”

Minnowstream shook her head. “No, Willowstorm. We all need to rest for now.”

“No, we must eat. Especially you! I know you haven’t eaten in almost three days now.”

“Willowstorm…”

“We’ll bring back lots of fresh-kill, I promise.”

“Willowstorm, you’re as tired as the rest of us. Could you please just listen to me and hunt in the morning?”

“I’ll see you when we get back!”

“Sleep now and hunt later so that…”

“Bye, Minnowstream!”

“But Willowstorm…”

Willowstorm apparently wasn’t listening. She marched off with Dusktail following close behind. To Minnowstream’s surprise, the two warriors’ tails briefly entwined and Dusktail whispered something in her ear. *Has my sister finally found a mate?* Minnowstream shook her head. *No, it can’t be. Willowstorm just said the other day that she’ll never fall in love because it would distract her from her duties as a warrior.*

Under normal circumstance, Minnowstream would’ve never been capable of falling asleep on the hard ground. After all, she accustomed to the warm, soft bedding in the warriors den. Also, if things were like they were only a few sunrises ago, she could’ve never rested with the icy claws of hunger gripping her stomach. But only moments after closing her, darkness came and Minnowstream drifted into a brief, dreamless sleep.

When Minnowstream woke, all was silent. Her cats slept peacefully inside of the clearing. She glanced at the sky and groaned inwardly. It wasn't even sunhigh yet!

Minnowstream was feeling too restless and hungry to go back to sleep. She rose to her aching paws and silently crept out into the forest. Her fur got snagged on a bramble and with annoyance, she pulled free, leaving behind a tuft of silver fur.

Minnowstream was starving. Her hunger was so bad that she thought her paws felt weak beneath her. *I need to eat soon. We all do. I suppose I should hunt. If Willowstorm, Dusktail, and I catch enough prey, maybe every cat will be able to have a few mouthfuls.*

Minnowstream blundered through the forest. Frustration nearly overwhelmed her as she tripped over a tree root, probably scaring away all of the prey nearby.

She moved on, carefully placing each paw. Finally, she spotted a mouse. Scanning the ground for any twigs or other obstacles, she slid slowly towards it. With a swift swipe of a forepaw, she dispatched it. The rich odor drifted into her nose and Minnowstream became once more painfully aware of her hunger. Before she realized what she was doing, she had leaned down and ravenously tore off a mouthful of meat. *Well, I guess there's no point in spitting it out.*

She swallowed with a sense of guilt rising up deep inside. "Forgive me, StarClan. I never intended to eat but I couldn't resist."

"It's okay. After all, you *must* keep your strength up. I know you're *so* important."

At first, Minnowstream thought it was a reply from her warrior answers. But a StarClan warrior would've never said those words with such a mocking and sarcastic sneer. She lashed her tail and searched for the cat. She determined it was a tom because it was a masculine voice. She looked to the right since those words came from that direction. "Who's there?" she snarled. "Show yourself, unless you're a coward."

An amused purr came from her left this time. “*Great* catch by the way. You got real talent, although I think my kits can do better!”

Minnowstream bristled with indignation. “Hey, I caught it!”

The cat snorted, this time sounding like it was behind her. “Sheer luck! I mean, seriously, how have you survived this long with such pitiful hunting skills?”

“Show yourself!” she spat, unsheathing her claws. “I may not be so gifted in hunting, at least in this setting, but if you want to test my fighting skills, go ahead!”

The tom chuckled, at her right again. “Wish granted!”

Before Minnowstream could brace herself for an attack, a black-and-white blur exploded out of the bushes in front of her. The breath was knocked out of her upon impact and she tumbled to the ground.

A/N: Really long chapter this time, I worked hard on it for you guys! :D You learn important stuff about characters. Like Ratpaw, Deerpaw, and Littlepaw are Minnowstream's kits and Streamwhisker is her mate. Willowstorm tries to never show emotions and seems to like Dusktail.

Plus, cliffhanger! (YAY!) What do you think is going to happen and who do you think this mysterious tom is?

Chapter 5

Chapter 5

Thunder roared loudly and rain pelted down from the gray sky. Only the brave or perhaps foolish warriors were in the clearing. Among them stood Flamestar, his dark ginger fur sodden, as he spoke to Petalfall, a gorgeous she-cat with long, fluffy cream-colored fur. Petalfall though, wisely sheltering under a ledge, remained warm and dry.

A light gray she-cat poked her head out of warriors den, where interlacing brambles had kept the warriors from being drenched by the ceaseless downpour, and groaned inwardly. *Rain! The only things I hate more are leaf-bare, greencough, ShadowClan, and WindClan!*

Another cream-colored she-cat, practically identical to Petalfall, emerged and stood next to her. Following close behind was a golden brown tom with a scarred muzzle. The two cats affectionately touched noses and purred as the light gray she-cat rolled her pale green eyes. Not caring to watch them, the she-cat lowered her head and began to lick the scraps of moss from her white chest fur.

The cream-colored she-cat gave her a knowing look. “Crazyheart, just because you think love is a mouse-brained idea doesn’t mean I have to!”

Crazyheart shook her head. “It’s your decision to be stuck in the nursery for six moons.”

“When Crazyheart says that, it has nothing to with being stuck in the nursery.” The tom gave an amused twitch of his whiskers. “It’s because she doesn’t like me!”

“No, that’s not true, Breezewhisker!” Crazyheart protested.

Breezewhisker turned to the cream colored she-cat. “Crazyheart just said she hated me! Well, Roseleaf, please don’t judge your sister because of that.”

Crazyheart pawed at the ground with frustration. “You know that’s not what I said!”

“ROSELEAF, CRAZYHEART JUST SAID SHE HATES ME!!!!!!!!”

“Breezewhisker! You know I didn’t!”

“YES YOU DID!!!!!!”

“DID NOT! AND BE QUIET, YOU’RE GOING TO WAKE EVERY CAT IN THE CAMP!”

“DID TOO! AND WHO’S YELLING NOW?”

“You. Thanks for asking. AND FOR THE LAST TIME I DO NOT HATE YOU!”

“Why did you say it then?”

“I DIDN’T, BREEZEWHISKER, YOU STUPID FURBALL!”

“Name-calling is unkind.”

“Who said I care?”

Roseleaf stifled a laugh as their bickering went on. Crazyheart heard her mutter, “Great StarClan!” under her breath.

Breezewhisker cleared his throat, drawing her attention back to him. “I did!”

“Well, I wasn’t asking for your opinion!” Crazyheart snapped.

“Well, I wasn’t asking for yours!” he retorted.

Crazyheart lashed her tail impatiently. “I don’t need your commentary after every word I say!”

“Always need to have the last word, don’t…” Breezewhisker trailed off as a black blur crashed into him.

Sandpaw had Roseleaf pinned to the ground as well. “Nightstar, we have found these ShadowClan invaders on our territory! What should we do with them?”

Nightpaw’s pale blue eyes gleamed as she glanced at her sister. “Shred them, Sandwhisker! Teach them a lesson!”

Their other sister, Whitepaw, stood at a distance, watching them. She looked bored.

“Whitepelt! There’s another intruder on our territory!” Nightpaw yowled, pointing with her tail to Crazyheart. “Attack!”

Whitepaw didn’t budge a whisker as Sandpaw began to pummel her mother’s belly with powerful hind paws.

“Just what do you think you’re doing?” Roseleaf spat crossly.

Breezewhisker’s gaze flickered to his mate. “Let them be. They’re only kits.”

The cream-colored she-cat rolled her blue eyes. “Kits?” Her voice was incredulous. “They’re apprentices.”

“Same thing,” Breezewhisker purred.

“KITS? APPRENTICES?” Nightpaw sounded genuinely insulted. “We’re WARRIORS!”

Breezewhisker twisted his head and nipped her forepaw before slithering out of the black-furred apprentice’s grasp. “Prove it then!”

Nightpaw lunged for her father, who swiftly hopped backwards, just out of reach. Roseleaf turned away wordlessly and sprinted to the fresh-kill pile. She returned as Breezewhisker knocked his daughter over with a kick of his hind legs. Roseleaf tossed Crazyheart a muddy mouse and settled down with a soggy

vole for herself, not before shaking herself dry though. The gray-furred she-cat wrinkled her nose as water droplets rained down from the sky.

Breezewhisker narrowed his eyes. “Why nothing for me?”

“You were too busy playing to eat,” Roseleaf meowed, a purr rising in her throat. “Get it yourself.”

“I don’t need to.” Fast as an adder, Breezewhisker knocked the vole from her jaws with a forepaw and ripped off a strip of meat, hurriedly swallowing.

After giving him a playful cuff on the head, Roseleaf dashed back to the pile.

Crazyheart had finished her mouse by this time, having devoured it in a few ravenous bites. Looking at the meager stack of prey, she shook her head.

Breezewhisker followed her gaze. “What?”

“All of this rain has sent the prey back to its burrows!” she complained.

Roseleaf joined them with a sparrow clamped in her jaws. “I’m sure there’s something you could find. Why don’t you go hunting?”

Just the thought of wet fur sent shudders down her spine. “NEVER! NOT EVEN IF STARCLAN THEMSELVES CAME DOWN AND ASKED ME TO!”

Crazyheart rose to her paws and padded away. She skirted around the center of the clearing, making an attempt to stay at least somewhat dry. She arrived at the narrow entrance to a cave. Meowing a greeting, she walked in.

A bluish-gray she-cat was sitting near an assortment of herbs at the back of the den. She hooked a shriveled blue berry with a claw and pushed it to one side, along with a few dusty, old leaves. “Hello, Crazyheart. What can I do for you?”

A/N: This was Crazyheart POV. Just so you know, in case you can't tell, Crazyheart is a ThunderClan cat. This is how you'll find out most of what is happening back at the lake. :D

Thanks for reading and I apologize for not updating for so long! Hope you enjoyed and please share your thoughts with me in the comments! This chapter was extra long just for you, my wonderful fans! I hope you had some laughing moments because I tried to make some of it funny :)

Chapter 6

Chapter 6

Crazyheart sat, neatly wrapping her tail around her forepaws. “Bluepool, it’s just my apprentice, Whitepaw…I’m worried about her.”

Bluepool didn’t look away from the assortment of herbs. “Look, Crazyheart, I know she wants to be a medicine cat. Every cat in the Clan does! But I already have one apprentice. What am I supposed to do, tell Birchleaf that he can’t be a medicine cat anymore?”

“No! Did I say that?” Crazyheart took a deep breath. “I don’t know what to do! Her sisters were practicing their battle moves on their parents, but she showed no interest in joining in! How am I supposed to train a cat who doesn’t want to be a warrior?”

Bluepool’s gaze still remained fixed on her supplies. “Crazyheart, just keep training her like you are now. It’s not like she has the option of being a medicine cat.”

Crazyheart narrowed her eyes. “You could at least look at me as you speak.”

“Sorry, Crazyheart, I’m just busy. I’ve wasted so much marigold on Smallstream’s ear because he won’t rest for just ONE DAY and let the wound heal.” Bluepool stepped away and turned her head towards the gray-furred she-cat. “Not to mention the watermint and juniper that I had to give Sandpaw the other night because she thought it was such a BRILLIANT idea to take two mice from the fresh-kill pile just because there was extra. And then we’re running low on comfrey that I need for Thrushpaw’s broken leg…”

Crazyheart realized for the first time that Thrushpaw wasn’t there. “Where is he? Isn’t he hurt?”

Bluepool nodded impatiently. “I sent him outside to get some fresh-air. Now, great StarClan, where is Birchleaf with the comfrey I requested?”

At that moment, the dark brown tom entered the cave with herbs in his jaws, which he set on the ground. Crazyheart gave an irritated hiss as he shook himself dry, of course, right next to her. “Sorry!” the medicine cat apologized sheepishly.

Bluepool raised an eyebrow at her apprentice. “What took so long? Did you decide to travel all the way to sun-drown-place?” She bent to sniff at the leaves. “And this isn’t even comfrey! It’s yarrow!”

Birchleaf dipped his head to his mentor. “Yes, some of it is yarrow. I decided to gather it because I passed right by it anyways. But there’s comfrey too.”

As Bluepool added the herbs to her neat piles, Birchleaf looked to Crazyheart for the first times. “Greetings, Crazyheart.” The tom was looking not at her face, but her paws. “I thought you had white paws, not brown!”

Crazyheart briefly glanced down. The fur on her paws was thoroughly coated with mud. “For StarClan’s sake, Birchleaf, you’ve just been outside as well! Look at your own paws!”

Birchleaf was about to say something but Crazyheart interrupted him as a pungent scent drifted into her nostrils. “WindClan! Not Fernstar in our camp again!”

The gray-furred she-cat dashed out of the medicine cat den and padded over to her father. The WindClan leader was just emerging through the thorn tunnel. “Greetings, Flamestripe. Where is Stonestar? I need to speak to him.”

“Stonestar died about a quarter-moon ago.” Flamestar’s voice was polite, but Crazyheart saw annoyance flash in his amber eyes. “I am leader.”

Fernstar dipped her head respectfully to Flamestar. “I am

sorry to hear that Stonestar is dead. He was a noble cat and a loyal friend that'll be missed by all four Clans."

Does she not realize that she's not as welcome here as she thinks she is?

At the start of the newleaf after the Great Battle, with the last pawful of warriors still recovering from their wounds and an outbreak of greencough, ThunderClan had been completely unprepared for an attack from ShadowClan. Ivystar, the ShadowClan leader, was furious with ThunderClan after finding Silvercloud's dead body on their territory with Brightleaf's fur in between his claws. Brightleaf, along with other warriors who witnessed his death, tried to explain to Ivystar that Silvercloud had sided with the Dark Forest. Brightleaf had no choice but to kill him when he tried to break into the nursery.

But Ivystar refused to believe them. She waited for the moment when ThunderClan was weak, and then chose to attack. Her warriors were trying to drive them out as revenge for killing their leader's son. Since ShadowClan had lost fewer cats to Splashheart and greencough, they outnumbered ThunderClan. Crazyheart remembered hiding in the nursery with her littermates, terrified, as shrieks from the battle pierced through the thick brambles.

Stonestar had told Breezewhisker, then the newly-apprenticed Breezepaw, to ask Heatherstar to help. Little did he know that Heatherstar had died and Fernstar, the new leader, would forever believe that ThunderClan was in WindClan's debt. She brought a patrol of warriors and ThunderClan won the battle thanks to her, of course, but now she thought she could just march into their camp whenever she wanted to.

"Who's your deputy?" Fernstar asked finally, breaking the silence.

"Crazyheart." The gray-furred she-cat noticed that the fur on Flamestar's neck was bristling, as if he was struggling to control his temper. "Why have you come, Fernstar? The Gathering is tonight. Couldn't this have waited until then?"

Fernstar's eyes widened with surprise. "Great StarClan, Flamestar! I only wished to warn you that RiverClan ambushed one of our hunting patrols yesterday and ran off with our prey! My warriors reported that they looked very hungry, fearful…and desperate. And if they are desperate, they might attack you!"

Fernstar turned around and stomped off.

Crazyheart turned to her father. "Seriously, Flamestar? Why didn't you tell her to stop coming over to ThunderClan to chat EVERY OTHER DAY!"

Flamestar sighed. "She was only trying to warn us."

Crazyheart rolled her eyes. "Flamestar, think logically. If RiverClan were to attack somebody, it would be ShadowClan or WindClan. It's highly unlikely that they'd trek halfway around the lake to steal our prey when they could just ambush WindClan or ShadowClan, who are in closer proximity."

"I understand, Crazyheart." Flamestar stared at his paws. "But it's better to be allies with WindClan then to make them our enemies. Now I know this is the leader's responsibility but tonight I'd like you to choose the cats who will attend the Gathering."

Crazyheart knew he was just trying to change the subject but she went along with it anyways. "Sandpaw and Nightpaw for our apprentices…"

"What about Whitepaw? You don't want your apprentice to go?"

"She doesn't care about being a warrior and she doesn't put any effort into training. StarClan knows, I wish every night that I had a different apprentice! Anyhow, warriors…Roseleaf, Blazeheart…"

"Of course you want your sisters to come," Flamestar meowed teasingly.

"FLAMESTAR! Are you going to let me finish? Okay, obviously me, you, Bluepool, and Birchleaf…how about

Breezewhisker and his brother Smallstream? I know you will want Petalfall there so I'll include her. Lastly, can we take Sorrelfur and Moonstripe?"

Flamestar nodded. "Thank you, Crazyheart. We will leave shortly before sundown."

A/N: I'm officially off of school for winter break! I'm going to try to post at least 10 more chapters of this book before I go back to school so expect frequent updates! I'll update Shadestar's Agony over the break once or twice but I'll be writing more of this story.

The Gathering is the next chapter! Hope you enjoyed and may StarClan light your path! :D

Chapter 7

Chapter 7

The storms of the morning had cleared, leaving behind only a few thin wisps of cloud. As Crazyheart and her Clanmates trekked on by the lakeshore, one drifted across the moon, briefly blotting out some of its light. *Is that a sign? A sign that the truce is about to be broken, perhaps?*

The ThunderClan cats had only just crossed into WindClan territory. The small stretch of forest on WindClan's side of the stream ended, to be replaced by barren moorland. Hills went on to the horizon, covered by grass and rocks. In the distance, Crazyheart could just catch a glimpse of the horse-place.

They arrived at the tree-bridge. WindClan came from the opposite direction, at the same time. For a moment, Fernstar and Flamestar stared at each other, neither saying a word. Then, Crazyheart's father stepped back and dipped his head courteously to the light brown she-cat. "WindClan may pass first," Flamestar meowed.

Fernstar nodded and leapt onto the tree-bridge. "Thank you, Flamestar."

Crazyheart gritted her teeth, struggling to keep back a snarl of fury. *Why does he have to be so nice to that mouse-brained she-cat?*

Apparently, other cats were having similar thoughts. She heard low growls rumbling in the throats of some warriors and Blazeheart, who stood to her right, stiffened, anger smoldering in her eyes.

At last, after a cat had time to travel to the mountains and back, or so it seemed to Crazyheart, WindClan had finished crossing. The gray-furred she-cat leapt up onto the tree just behind

her father. For a moment, her hind legs dangled in mid-air. Scrabbling with her forepaws at the slippery bark, she quickly hauled herself up. She crossed carefully, using her tail for balance and her claws to get a better grip. Soon, she was leaping down onto the sandy shore of the island.

Pushing through the bushes, Crazyheart emerged into the clearing. The other three Clans were already waiting. She padded over to her new seat at the base of the Dead Oak, eager to tell her RiverClan friend, Minnowstream, that she was ThunderClan's new deputy. Instead, she was greeted by Lionpelt.

The golden tom looked up. "Greetings, Crazyheart. Looking for Minnowstream, I assume?"

Crazyheart couldn't answer. She was too stunned by his appearance. Instead of being sleek and glossy as usual, his fur was dull, matted, and unkempt, as if he hadn't the time or perhaps the energy to groom it. His bones showed through his pelt and his amber eyes were darkened by hunger. *RiverClan are supposed to be the fattest Clan by the lake! But now, they look scrawnier than WindClan.*

Lionpelt noticed the expression on her face. "Yes, I know, we're a little bit skinnier than usual."

A little bit?

Crazyheart tried to speak again. "Great StarClan, Lionpelt, what happened? You look-look…"

"Awful?" Lionpelt's gaze was challenging, as if daring her to admit that had been exactly what she'd been thinking. "RiverClan doesn't want the other Clans' pity or sympathy."

"Where's Minnowstream?" Crazyheart blurted out. "Did she die of starvation or something?"

Lionpelt shook his head. "No. She left on a journey, along with some of our warriors."

Crazyheart felt a mixture of relief and worry. "Where did

she go?"

"We don't know," Lionpelt replied.

"Is it dangerous?" Crazyheart hoped her friend was still alive, wherever she was.

"Yes, but it's no worse than staying here." The RiverClan warrior suddenly sounded exhausted and miserable. "Nothing could be."

Crazyheart was saved from having to respond to a comment like that by Oakstar's call. "We gather before StarClan to discuss the happenings of the past moon and to uphold the temporary truce, as is the will of our ancestors!"

The ShadowClan leader's green eyes scanned the crowd. "ShadowClan has one new apprentice this moon: Hollypaw!"

The four Clans gave a warm welcome to the new apprentice. Oakstar nodded to Flamestar, signaling that he had finished speaking and wished for ThunderClan to speak.

"Stonestar died about a quarter-moon ago, and I am ThunderClan's new leader," Flamestar meowed. "Crazyheart is my deputy!"

Crazyheart lifted her chin with pride as all four Clans cheered for her.

After a moment or two, Flamestar raised his tail as a signal for silence. "Also, we have three new apprentices. Their names are Whitepaw, Sandpaw, and Nightpaw!" The ThunderClan leader waited yet again as the warriors chanted the names of the new 'paws. "Pebblestar, would you like to speak next?"

"Minnowstream is gone." Pebblestar's voice was oddly flat. "Lionpelt is our new deputy."

None of the Clans chanted Lionpelt's name this time. Uneasy silence followed Pebblestar's announcement. *What is wrong in RiverClan?*

Crazyheart looked at the crowd. She spotted Reedstream, Briarstorm, Vineleaf, Leafclaw, Tigerstep, and Deerpaw. It seemed that at least RiverClan had enough cats to bring a decent patrol to the Gathering. *Perhaps things aren't so bad…but they must be. All of these cats are so skinny!*

Fernstar opened her mouth to speak and instantly, Crazyheart knew there would be trouble. "Whatever problems you are having in RiverClan give you no excuse to steal prey from us and to ATTACK MY PATROL! It's breaking the warrior code, which surely infuriates StarClan!"

Pebblestar's fur stood on end and his eyes narrowed. "If StarClan have a problem with my actions, then they should come down to island and say it to my face instead of hiding in the sky like cowards! And they should also justify the fact that they HAVE NOT HELPED RIVERCLAN AT ALL! StarClan are worthless!"

Gasps of shock came from the crowd as Pebblestar unsheathed his claws and leapt on a stunned Fernstar, sending both leaders tumbling from the tree onto the ground. She flailed wildly beneath him, but the RiverClan leader clearly had more strength. He held her down with ease and raked sharp claws across her stomach, powerful muscles rippling beneath the fur on his shoulders.

Fernstar kicked upwards forcefully with her hindlegs. Winded, Pebblestar's grip relaxed ever so slightly and the WindClan leader slithered out of his grasp. She leapt towards him, but Pebblestar easily swatted her away with one forepaw, as if she was as light as a feather.

The island was plunged into darkness as clouds covered the moon. The two fighting cats ignored the sign from StarClan, too furious to care or perhaps too occupied by the battle to notice. Fernstar barely rolled out of the way in time as Pebblestar charged. Before the WindClan leader could scramble back to her paws, the dark gray tom had turned and planted his left forepaw on her chest.

On the Dead Oak, Oakstar and Flamestar exchanged a glance. Both cats had heard the stories of how StarClan once set the

island on fire and were fearful of StarClan showing its anger over the two battling leaders.

Flamestar pounced on Pebblestar and dragged him off of Fernstar. However muscular and frightening the RiverClan leader was, Crazyheart's father was even stronger.

Fernstar's eyes gleamed in the darkness, assuming that she was getting assistance from her ally. She raced towards Pebblestar, but Oakstar jumped in front of her. She skidded to a halt, narrowly avoiding a collision with the ShadowClan leader.

"STOP!" Flamestar's voice was outraged. "These quarrels should be settled at a different place and a different time! By the will of StarClan, this Gathering is dismissed!"

Pebblestar opened his jaws more than likely to protest or make some scathing remark about StarClan, but thought better of it as both Flamestar and Oakstar shot him a warning look.

Flamestar beckoned with his tail for his Clan to leave. Crazyheart padded over to his side and prepared herself for the long journey home.

A/N: Hope you enjoyed the chapter! I really want to hear your thoughts about this chapter so please share them with me in the comments! Thank you for reading, you all are awesome!

Happy holidays and may StarClan light your path!

Chapter 8

Chapter 8

Crazyheart organized the patrols as soon as the Clan arrived back at stone hollow. “Moonstripe will lead the dawn patrol to the WindClan border with Roseleaf, Petalfall, and Whitepaw. Breezewhisker will take Ashpelt, Smallstream, and Nightpaw. We’ll also have two hunting patrols. Blazeheart, take your apprentice, Sandpaw, with you to wherever you want to go hunting. Sorrelfur and…”

“I will go,” Flamestar interrupted.

Crazyheart nodded. “Okay. And Flamestar, may I speak with you in your den?”

“Of course.” Flamestar turned in the direction of his den. “Come on.”

Crazyheart followed him into the leaders den. She sat down close to the entrance.

“What is it?” Flamestar meowed.

“StarClan says that there should always be four Clans by the lake! We can’t let RiverClan starve to death!” Crazyheart wondered if her father would understand. “Please let me go to RiverClan tomorrow!”

Flamestar hesitated. “Crazyheart, why do you ALWAYS have to think you can solve every problem around the lake? We have our own Clan to worry about!”

“I know but…”

“Yes, I get it, you want to do the right thing and follow the warrior code.” Flamestar sighed. “Very well. When the hunting patrols return tomorrow, you will tell them to carry one piece of

prey each and accompany you. Except for me, course. Moonstripe will take my place. You will offer the fresh-kill to RiverClan in exchange for being taken to their camp to speak with Pebblestar. If they refuse to take you to camp, you leave without giving them the food. Understood?"

"Yes, Flamestar. Thank you!" Crazyheart left her father's den and settled down in the warriors den.

It was just after moonhigh when she drifted into a dreamless sleep.

She woke just before sunhigh and padded out of the warriors den. Flamestar came over to meet her.

"Good morning, Crazyst..I mean, Crazyheart," Flamestar meowed.

Crazyheart rolled her eyes. "That's only the thousandth time you've accidentally called me Crazystar!"

Flamestar looked embarrassed. "I've told you before, you look a lot like her. Sometimes when I stare at your eyes I feel like I'm looking at my mother's gaze since you have her light green eyes. But, that's not what I'm here to talk to you about. I wanted to tell you that you should travel through ShadowClan territory instead of WindClan territory. Fernstar won't be pleased if she finds out that you're going to help RiverClan after they attacked her patrol."

"Why should we care what Fernstar thinks?" Crazyheart muttered.

Flamestar tried to look angry but couldn't hide his amusement. "We shouldn't go looking for a fight intentionally. With greenleaf nearly over, we can't afford to get injured or cause trouble with WindClan. Anyhow, I informed Moonstripe, Sorrelfur, and Blazeheart of the plans for the afternoon. I also told Sandpaw and Whitepaw to swap places on the patrols this morning because I want your apprentice to go with you."

“WHAT? WHY? All she’ll do is complain!” Crazyheart glared at Flamestar. “I don’t want her to come with me!”

Flamestar met her gaze. “You never know, she might actually enjoy herself and be glad to go with you.”

Crazyheart snorted. “And hedgehogs fly! I bet she grumbled about it when you told her, didn’t she?”

Flamestar’s silence was an answer in itself.

Crazyheart was about to speak as Blazeheart and Whitepaw returned to camp. Blazeheart had caught two mice and a squirrel while Whitepaw had nothing in her jaws. *I guess that means she caught NOTHING! I bet she didn’t even try!*

***

Crazyheart’s patience was gone.

They hadn’t even left camp yet and Whitepaw was already complaining. *Why did Flamestar have to make me take my apprentice with the patrol?*

“This is really dumb,” Whitepaw huffed to Moonstripe. “This is a *warrior* job and warrior stuff is boring! Why do I have to go to RiverClan to hunt for them? I HATE hunting!”

Crazyheart halted and glared at her. “Would you rather I leave you here and you can do battle training with your sisters?”

Whitepaw curled her lip in disgust. “Battle training? NO WAY! I don’t ever want to participate in a fight! They’re pointless and for mouse-brained fools!”

“The only mouse-brained fool here is you!” Frustration welled up inside of Crazyheart. “Now grab that rabbit there on top of the fresh-kill pile and maybe carrying that will keep your mouth shut! Because the rest of us don’t want to hear your ceaseless complaining!”

Whitepaw wordlessly stomped over to the fresh-kill pile.

Crazyheart and the rest of the patrol followed close behind. The ThunderClan deputy selected a plump thrush while Moonstripe took two mice and Sorrelfur took a squirrel. Blazeheart carried a blackbird that she'd caught herself.

Crazyheart padded out of camp and the sound of pawsteps behind her told her that her Clanmates had followed. The leaves of the trees had begun to turn red, orange, and brown, the first sign that leaf-fall had arrived.

She took a route close to the lakeshore, passing the Sky Oak and making sure she was able to see the lake at all times. The patrol crossed over the Twoleg path and stopped near the half-bridge at the ShadowClan border.

Crazyheart sniffed the air and looked a few times, but there was no sign of any ShadowClan cats. She led on into the dark, shadowy pines.

They passed through a muddy clearing and then passed by the trail that led to the camp entrance. Crazyheart signaled for her cats to keep down and even Whitepaw had the sense to obey. They were close enough to see the thorn tunnel that was the entryway to camp and even to see that warriors stationed on guard. Luckily, the patrol went onwards without being caught.

The fishy stink of RiverClan hit Crazyheart's nose and she turned to her sister. "What's this? I thought the border was farther up! RiverClan never had this stretch of pine trees!"

Blazeheart shrugged. "I don't know. The less ShadowClan territory we have to pass through, the better."

As they were about to cross over the scent-marks, a growl came from behind them. "What are you doing on ShadowClan territory?"

Redfeather, one of ShadowClan's senior warriors, and his apprentice, Rainpaw, were hurrying over to them.

Crazyheart muttered under her breath. "Why did they

have to catch us now? We were almost there!"

Rainpaw's eyes widened when he saw the fresh-kill dangling from their jaws. "Prey-stealers!"

At least Redfeather has always been one of the friendlier ShadowClan warriors.

Crazyheart hurriedly shook her head. "No, no, it's not like that, please…"

Her heart sank as she saw a cat pelting towards them at full speed, the light of battle already in his eyes. *Mudblaze! He's the most bloodthirsty ShadowClan warrior I know!*

Mudblaze leapt at Crazyheart. "HOW DARE YOU?"

Crazyheart sidestepped and was surprised to see Redfeather grab Mudblaze by the scruff. He dragged the young brown tom backwards.

Maybe we should make a run for it, but then we'd look guilty…and besides, they might catch us.

Redfeather turned a cold glare towards the ThunderClan cats. "We will let the intruders explain themselves first."

"No! They all have stolen prey!" Mudblaze flailed around wildly, trying to escape the older warrior's grasp. "We must take them back to camp and they can EXPLAIN IT TO OAKSTAR!"

Please, StarClan, no! We don't need trouble with ShadowClan! We were only trying to help RiverClan…

Redfeather hesitated. "I suppose you're right. Very well. Follow us."

"Do we fight them?" Blazeheart hissed.

Crazyheart began to pad after Redfeather. "No. We do NOT want trouble with ShadowClan for no reason."

Rainpaw ran ahead to warn Oakstar, so the ShadowClan leader was already waiting in the clearing when they arrived.

Whatever I think of the rest of ShadowClan, Oakstar is a noble cat. I hope he will listen to me and at least give me a chance to explain what happened.

As soon as the ThunderClan cats emerged in the camp, all heads turned and the cats crowded around them, many with claws unsheathed. Even from the direction of the nursery, a kit squealed, "Die, ThunderClan prey-stealers!" Crazyheart heard the excited cries of his siblings as he attacked them.

Oakstar usually remained calm. But now, his body quivered with fury and hostility flickered in his eyes.

Crazyheart nervously waited for him to speak.

"I trusted ThunderClan." Oakstar's voice was edged with scorn and icy disapproval. "I thought Flamestar was a decent cat. Apparently, I thought wrong!"

"Oakstar, please!" Crazyheart pleaded. "It isn't what you think it is! Please, I beg you, let me explain to you in your den, alone!"

"I'm a fool," Oakstar muttered. "But alright. Make it quick. I don't want to hear excuses though. I know very well that ThunderClan isn't starving! The forest is prey-rich after a long greenleaf."

Whitepaw leaned over to Sorrelfur and whispered something in her ear. *I bet a moon's worth of dawn patrols that she's asking where the medicine cat den is.*

Sure, enough the white-furred she-cat soon bolted over the medicine cat den, which was just behind Oakstar's den. "Hi, Pinestripe! Do you have an apprentice?"

A golden brown tom named Beetlepaw padded into the den. "Yes, she does! He's right here! Now, get out, ThunderClan scum!"

Crazyheart decided to forget about her annoying apprentice for a little while. She turned around and watched as the tip of the dark brown tabby's tail disappeared into his den.

Oakstar poked his head out of the den. "Are you coming or not?"

Crazyheart rose to her paws. She hesitantly walked through the entrance to the large bramble thicket.

Inside, it was large and spacious. Oakstar's nest had more than likely just been arranged by an apprentice. Fresh, soft moss laid in one corner and a few feathers had been placed neatly on top to make it even more comfortable. A fat squirrel had also been left for the ShadowClan leader to eat.

Oakstar settled down in his nest and gestured for Crazyheart to sit as well. "What do you have to say for yourselves?"

"We didn't steal the prey from your territory…"

Disbelief flashed in Oakstar's eyes. "I'm supposed to believe that? And hedgehogs fly!"

"No, really, I swear by StarClan, we brought it from ThunderClan territory!" Crazyheart hoped Oakstar heard the truth in her words. "We didn't so much as *look* at any prey from your land!"

"Really?" Oakstar sniffed at the squirrel but didn't take a bite. "Why would you drag so much fresh-kill halfway around the lake? How would that benefit ThunderClan?"

Crazyheart dropped the thrush to make it easier for her to talk. "It wouldn't. But we were going to help RiverClan. They looked like they were starving at the Gathering."

To her relief, the fury evaporated from Oakstar's bright green eyes. "RiverClan. They're going through tough times. Troubles I wouldn't wish upon any cat."

Why didn't I think to ask Oakstar about RiverClan at the

Gathering? He shares a border with them! Obviously Fernstar wouldn't be helpful but maybe Oakstar can tell us the problem!

"What's wrong with RiverClan? Do you know?" Crazyheart asked curiously.

"Twolegs and their horrible monsters." Oakstar nibbled thoughtfully at the squirrel. "Their roaring was so loud as they demolished RiverClan's camp that you could hear it all the way over here."

Crazyheart's heartbeat quickened. "Their camp is ruined?"

Oakstar nodded. "The Twolegs have also been moving soil to fill in the stream. RiverClan can't fish anymore and they don't have very much territory left even if they could hunt land prey."

"That's horrible!" Crazyheart felt awful for the RiverClan cats. "I really do hope we can help them!"

"ShadowClan wants to help too." Oakstar tore off a mouthful of meat and chewed slowly before swallowing. "We will send warriors to come with you, if you don't mind."

"We don't mind at all! Thank you!" Crazyheart exclaimed.

Maybe it wasn't so bad that we got caught by ShadowClan after all…

A/N: Hope you enjoyed! I tried to be really detailed and give good descriptions! This is a super long chapter so I really want to hear your thoughts, I seriously think this might be my longest chapter ever(it is at least so far! It's 5 pages for StarClan's sake!) Please comment with your feedback!

Chapter 9

A/N: I REALLY HATE WATTPAD RIGHT NOW!!!!! THEY DELETED THIS CHAPTER SOMEHOW SO I HAD TO RE-POST IT SO I AM SORRY TO GET YOUR HOPES UP BUT THIS IS NOT A NEW CHAPTER.

Chapter 9

Minnowstream flailed around in a panic. She felt a surge of satisfaction as her churning hindpaws connected with her attacker's belly. The tom screeched in fury and raked her claws across her stomach.

Her vision blurred as pain lanced up her sides. She still felt dizzy from her rough landing on the ground. She yowled in agony and thrashed around desperately, trying even harder to escape his grasp.

The tom kept her pinned to the ground. His eyes were dark blue moons of hatred. She recognized that look. She found herself lost in memories...

Sunblaze burst into camp. "They're coming! They're coming!"

Icewhisker, Minnowkit's father, looked at the she-cat. "Who?"

"The Dark Forest!"

Gasps spread through the camp.

Sunblaze opened her mouth again, trembling with fear. "They want to kill us! It's Breeze..."

A lithe brown tom appeared behind her, pulling himself out of the river and shaking his fur dry silently. Water shed from his thick sleek pelt easily. Momentarily, his green eyes flashed black, dark as night. Before any warning could be given, he pounced onto her back and mercilessly raked his claws repeatedly across the young warrior's back.

A stream of shadowy warriors flooded into camp, swimming across the river almost better than the RiverClan cats.

Minnowkit felt Pebblekit and Willowkit stiffen beside her, terrified. Teeth met her scruff and the kit was hurriedly shoved back into the nursery by Icewhisker. Pebblekit and Willowkit soon joined her.

Icewhisker glanced back one last time. "Stay in there! You must survive!"

Minnowkit watched as he leapt on a brown-furred she-cat who approaching the nursery. The camp was filled with the deafening shrieks of battle and the ground was starting to become littered with bodies. There were too many and most of them were RiverClan cats. Falconflight, Leafwhisker, Ravenfire, Aspenleaf....

Minnowkit cowered in fear as a dark gray tom barged into the nursery. His green eyes glowed with satisfaction. "AND NOW YOU'LL UNDERSTAND HOW I FELT!"

She gulped nervously and stepped forward to defend her siblings. She screamed as she felt claws pierce her side and she was sent flying to the other end of the den. The Dark Forest warrior towered over her, poised to strike. As his forepaw fell down towards her neck, a white blur bowled him over.

Icewhisker's blue eyes flashed with fury. "Leave her alone!"

The dark gray tom fell limp, but her father didn't fall for the trick. Icewhisker raked his claws across his stomach but was knocked away by a bluish-gray she-cat. The she-cat embedded her teeth in his neck.

A red-furred she-cat burst into the den, the glimmer of starlight at her paws. She gasped in horror. "No! Icewhisker!"

A brown tom appeared at her side. "Brother," he whispered. "I'm sorry. Come join us."

The Dark Forest warriors spun around upon the arrival of the StarClan cats. Without hesitation, Salmonstar and the brown tom slashed at the bluish-gray she-cat's neck. As one they turned to meet the dark gray tom's attack with a quick swipe across his throat.

Both evil warriors fell to the ground and faded, leaving behind nothing but a dark pool of blood.

Minnowkit scampered over to her father's side. "Icewhisker! No! Please don't leave me!"

Her siblings followed behind.

Icewhisker weakly lifted his head and a thin trail of blood seeped from his mouth. "My precious kits...I couldn't be more proud of you..."

Meanwhile, Pebblekit glanced up at his mother. "Salmonstar! What are you doing here?"

"StarClan will fight in this battle as well." Salmonstar bent down to touch noses with her son. "The Clans do not walk alone."

Willowkit looked up at her mother with wide, frightened eyes. "Can you save our father?"

Minnowkit noticed the dark brown tom flinch at the words father.

Salmonstar shook her head sadly. "No, my dear. I'm afraid even StarClan doesn't have that power."

Icewhisker's eyes clouded and his breathing came to an abrupt halt.

The dark brown tom gazed down at the white-furred tom's body. "StarClan will welcome him to our ranks."

Minnowkit felt too overwhelmed by grief to speak.

Willowkit stared at the tom. "Who are you?"

"This is Hailcloud, Icewhisker's brother," Salmonstar answered for him.

Minnowkit looked up at him. "Did you know our father well?"

Hailcloud's whiskers twitched, as if he had found something amusing in her words. "Yes, I knew him very well."

A faint image of a white-furred tom rose up from Icewhisker's dead body and padded over to stand beside the dead cats.

Icewhisker's eyes glistened. "Good-bye, my kits. I will see you again soon. I promise I will never forget you."

The brown tom charged through the nursery and tackled Hailcloud, pinning him to the ground. "I could kill you, my pathetic daughter. But I think it would hurt you more to see this one die. "

"Breezefur, why? Stop, please!" Salmonstar pleaded.

Willowkit stepped forward. "DON'T MAKE MY MOTHER UPSET!"

Breezefur glared at the kit with hatred gleaming in his eyes. He looked as if he had been wronged somehow, and that killing every cat in RiverClan would be the only way to get the proper revenge.

Salmonstar took advantage of the distraction and knocked Breezefur off of Hailcloud. "THIS MUST END!"

She sliced her claws across the Dark Forest tom's throat. He jerked once and was still. But his eyes were still open and even in death, they gleamed with seasons and seasons of hatred. His body faded away but Minnowkit knew the look in his eyes would stay with her forever.

Minnowstream shook her head and blinked a few times. Everytime she fought, she couldn't help but remember the Great Battle. The screeching of furious warriors, the pools of blood on the grass, the river's water tainted scarlet even...and worst of all, the yowls of agony as brave, noble, innocent cats died under the Dark Forest cats' claws. There were too many casualties on that day.

The look in the black-and-white tom's eyes was almost exactly the same as the expression in Breezefur's eyes. *He looks as if I have done something to him, and wants to see me die so he can get his revenge...but what did I do to him?*

The tom dug his claws deeper into her skin. "Any last words?"

Suddenly, a ginger cat came out of nowhere and sent the black-and-white tom sprawling. After dealing a few vicious blows, the flame-colored cat watched with satisfaction as Minnowstream's attacker went hurriedly limping away.

Minnowstream struggled back to her paws, her heart still pounding with terror. "T-thanks. Who are you?"

A/N: Sorry that it's shorter than my usual chapters but I decided to keep Minnowstream's conversation with the ginger cat for the next chapter. Most of this chapter is a flashback so I hoped you like this.

SPOILER ALERT!

The ginger cat is a VERY IMPORTANT character to the second and third books in this series.

Anyhow, as always, thanks for reading and please comment with your thoughts! May StarClan light your path! I'm so so SO SORRY for not updating this, I know I haven't updated in forever. I promise to update soon I already have written most of Chapter 10.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10

Minnowstream blinked. The cat who'd come to her rescue was a tom with thick ginger fur. Streaks of dirt and mud stained his pelt, which was matted and unkempt. She wondered when was the last time he groomed it. Regardless of his untidy appearance, the silver she-cat was wise enough to be grateful because she knew somehow with an absolute certainty that the black-and-white tom would've killed her if the flame-colored cat hadn't chased him off.

The tom looked at her and studied her carefully, as if trying to decide whether to shred her or let her go. His face was laced with scars and his right ear was torn. He seemed to have been in as many battles, if not more, than the average warrior. *Is that a good sign or a bad sign? What if he only wanted to have the pleasure of killing me himself?*

The most unnerving thing was his eyes. They were a frigid blue, like shards of ice, with a cold and calculating gleam in them that made Minnowstream back away. He had an aura about him, something that made her instantly think that there was something he wanted from her and that he had ulterior motives for rescuing her. She wasn't sure that he was any better than than the black-and-white cat.

Minnowstream managed to meet his icy blue gaze. "I asked you a question." She was surprised at how calm and confident she sounded. "Who are you? What's your name?"

Minnowstream got the feeling that the tom would only answer if he wanted to. Silence stretched on for several frustrating moments. "Well?" she demanded.

Amusement lit his icy blue gaze. "I suppose you can call me Spark. I apologize for Beetle's welcome. I..."

"Beetle?" she interrupted. "Was that the black-and-white cat?"

Spark nodded impatiently. "Yes. The fox-hearted fool attacks any cats he finds wandering through this forest. Except for me, of course. Even Beetle wouldn't be mouse-brained enough to do that. I'm afraid that one day he might kill a cat, though, StarClan forbid."

Minnowstream's eyes widened. *Did he just say StarClan?*

"Anyhow, I hope that I can..."

"Did you just say StarClan?" Minnowstream realized she had interrupted him yet again. "Sorry, Spark."

Spark sighed. "It's fine. I don't mind. I used to be a Clan cat, just like you. A WindClan cat."

"WindClan? *You* used to be a WindClan cat? But you aren't scrawny!"

Spark looked at her with disdain. "You are scrawny, and you're a RiverClan cat. If you're wondering how I know, it's because I'd NEVER forget that awful fishy scent of yours!"

Awful fishy scent? That's mean! He talks as if WindClan cats smell oh so wonderful!

"Hey!" she protested.

Spark shrugged. "What? It's true!"

Minnowstream glared at him. "At least RiverClan cats don't have that pungent rabbit smell!"

They stopped teasing each other at the sound of a desperate yowl to their left. *What was that?*

Something else unnerved her as well. She still felt uncomfortable around Spark, even if he was talking to her now and had once been a Clan cat. *He's not a Clan cat anymore. That might mean he doesn't follow the warrior code. And if he doesn't follow the code...well, then, there's nothing stopping him from killing me without any warning.*

Minnowstream hesitantly looked at Spark. The ginger tom's eyes were completely void of emotion, giving no hint of what his thoughts might truly be. The silver she-cat knew very well that a cat's actions and words didn't necessarily reveal what it was thinking in its heart. *I cannot trust him, I'm afraid. But in this miserable forest, Spark may be the only help us traveling cats can find...that is, if he'll help us.*

A thorn of guilt pricked her heart. *Perhaps I shouldn't be suspicious of Spark. Maybe he doesn't want anything from me. After all, I am the one who is hoping for help from him.*

"Did you hear that?" she asked.

Spark nodded. "Let's go see what it is."

Minnowstream crept cautiously through the undergrowth and narrowed her eyes, shocked to see a young she-cat with gorgeous fluffy white fur that looked as soft as clouds being pinned to the ground by Beetle. She wasn't surprised that Beetle had attacked another intruder. The shocking part was that the white-furred she-cat appeared to be expecting kits. Her enlarged stomach instantly revealed that to Minnowstream. Nonetheless, scarlet blood still flowed from a gash in her side. *How could he attack a mother who is expecting kits? That's awful!*

Spark curled his lip in distaste. "Beetle is a menace to this forest."

She exchanged a quick look with Spark before leaping out of the bushes with the ginger tom on her heels. In a matter of heartbeats, they had chased Beetle away. Minnowstream wished she had ripped out a little more fur in the quick blows she had dealt to his left cheek. *He deserves to suffer.*

The white she-cat looked at them in fear.

"What's your name?" she asked the she-cat gently.

"C-clover."

A/N: Bubblybluebananas and I are combining stories again! Clover is her character! Hoped you enjoyed!

Chapter 11

Chapter 11

It's clear she's expecting kits. I could help her. She could stay with the Clan. But is that a good idea?

Minnowstream looked again at the plump white-furred she-cat. She imagined Clover, cowering at the base of an oak tree, with Beetle in front of her her. She could envision the tom's eyes glinting with a murderous rage, his bloodstained claws unsheathed, his gruff voice sneering at the she-cat…

I can't just leave her here to die. Besides, we need more kits. Goldenshine's are already apprentice age...I suppose I do need to make them apprentices when we reach the new territory.

"Come with me," she decided.

Clover fell in behind the two cats. Every so often, Minnowstream would glance over her shoulder to make sure she was still following. The white-furred she-cat was steadily limping along. On the way back towards the camp, Spark walked in silence alongside her.

The ginger tom finally spoke. "So why did you leave your Clan?"

Minnowstream blinked, not expecting a question like that. "Leave? I would NEVER leave my Clan! The Clan are waiting for me. I was supposed to be hunting."

Spark's icy blue eyes momentarily flashed with surprise, but it was gone so quickly that Minnowstream wondered if she imagined it. "What are you RiverClan cats doing here, away from a river?"

Minnowstream stared at her paws, embarrassed of her Clan's troubles."It's, um, Twolegs came and destroyed our territory. We're looking for a new home."

“I’m sorry for your troubles,” Spark meowed.

Minnowstream sighed. “None of it is your fault, or any other cat’s fault. I don’t think there’s anybody to blame.”

“Of course there is!” Spark’s voice was filled with loathing and scorn. “It’s StarClan’s fault, obviously! And I bet they did NOTHING to help you. You Clan cats all praise StarClan as if they’ve ever helped you or given you anything but bad advice, words from fools. And now you are upset that you can’t escape the truth: StarClan is worthless.”

Minnowstream gaped at him. *It can’t be StarClan’s fault!* Meanwhile, deep inside, a small part of her agreed. *Well? Have StarClan helped us?*

“StarClan?” Clover sounded bewildered. “What’s StarClan?”

Minnowstream ignored the rogue she-cat. “Belief is not belief if it is lost in hard times. I trust that StarClan still walks beside us.”

Spark muttered something, then gave a slight nod. “Ignorance is wonderful, Minnowstream, but at one point a cat must step into the real world. The stars twinkle above, aware of your struggles but contented just to watch them. It’s like a cat is drowning in a river and you see them quite clearly, yet you don’t lift a paw to help them. Rather, you delight to watch them suffer and watch their head disappear beneath the surface of the stream.”

Minnowstream came to an abrupt halt and spun to face the tom. “Spark, you can have your beliefs and I can have mine. I will respect your opinions so long as you respect mine. And regardless of your...disrespect for our ancestors, I think you could be a valuable contribution to our Clan. The clearing is only a few tail-lengths away. Why don’t you give Clan life another try? Sparkshine would be a good name for you I think.”

Spark’s eyes narrowed. “The day I left WindClan, I swore I’d never take a Clan name again.”

Clover stopped at their sides. “What’s a Clan name mean?”

“I’ll explain later.” Minnowstream hardly even glanced at the white-furred she-cat. “But Spark, what do you have against StarClan and why won’t you take a Clan name.”

Spark didn’t answer. He scrambled up the tree trunk and looked in the direction of the clearing. “I know where you’re staying. It’s not the most comfortable place to sleep.”

He leapt down to the ground, landing on the leafy forest floor with a soft thud, and gave her a nod that Minnowstream recognized as a nod of farewell. Then, he dashed off and vanished, the trembling of the nearby bushes the only sign that he had been there a moment ago.

“I suppose that’s the last we’ll see of him,” Minnowstream murmured.

She felt only a strange sense of relief.

***

Minnowstream and Clover entered the clearing. The rogue she-cat gasped at the number of cats there were.

"There's so many of you!" she breathed.

Minnowstream rolled her eyes at the rogue's surprise. "There were once many more of us than there are now. Go rest somewhere."

Willowstorm appeared at her side; Dusktail trotted along behind her like her shadow. Minnowstream's sister's reddish-brown fur looked golden-brown in the dying yellow rays of the setting sun. Dusktail's emerald green eyes were focused on Willowstorm, adoration and affection clearly written in his gaze. His dusky brown pelt was ruffled as usual and the splotches of white-colored fur on his chest, paws, and tail glowed cream-colored as the light of the sunset struck him.

Willowstorm eyed the she-cat warily.

Clover took a few timid steps backwards. "Um...hi?"

"Who are you?" Willowstorm asked sharply.

"My-my name is C-clover," she stammered.

Willowstorm shot a glance at Minnowstream. " What is she doing here?"

Minnowstream stared at her paws. "She's expecting kits so I thought we could help her..."

Willowstorm glowered at the silver she-cat. "When we can't even take care of ourselves and we are slowly starving to death? Dusktail and I caught nothing! What do you expect us to give her?"

Minnowstream felt her neck fur rising as fury simmered inside of her. *Who does Willowstorm think she is, to try to tell me what to do? Pebblestar chose me to lead the traveling cats, not her!*

Clover took a few hasty steps backwards and lowered her head. "I-I can leave."

"No." Minnowstream's voice was firm and she heard the anger in it too. "Willowstorm, could you think of someone but yourself for once?"

Willowstorm flinched in surprise. "What?! I always put the Clan first..."

"I'm sorry," Minnowstream said. "That was mean. I don't have my usual patience since Ratpaw died."

Hurt glittered in Willowstorm's eyes still but Minnowstream sensed her push it away. "I-it's okay. I...I just...how are we supposed to feed another mouth?"

"Perhaps this will help," an amused voice purred.

Minnowstream spun around so quickly that she nearly fell over. Spark was standing only a tail-length away from her. *Willowstorm must've pretty upset if she didn't notice him right behind me. She always sees, hears, or smells everything.*

The ginger rogue held a squirrel, a thrush, and two mice in his jaws. It wasn't much but to the half-starved RiverClan cats, it looked like a feast.

Minnowstream gave Spark a grateful look. "Perhaps we shall all eat well tonight."

"Who's this?" Willowstorm demanded. "I'm assuming you know my sister? Minnowstream, have you befriended every rogue in the forest?"

Minnowstream rolled her eyes. "Willowstorm, stop complaining. Just shut up and eat."

Willowstorm didn't listen, of course. "What is his name?"

Spark's icy blue gaze met hers. "I suppose you may call me Spark. I've decided that I am going to help you and your Clan."

“Help?” Willowstorm’s fur bristled. “And why would we need help?”

“I assume you RiverClan cats don’t want to stay in a forest. You want to be near a river, I’m guessing.” Spark’s eyes gazed off into the horizon. “There’s a Twolegplace only a little ways away, and beyond that, there’s a valley where a river flows through.”

Minnowstream felt a strange chilling sensation. *He must be talking about the place where my mother stayed!*

Willowstorm flattened her ears. “Why should we trust you?”

“Willowstorm, stop!” Minnowstream protested. “I trust him! He saved my life! Besides, it sounds like he’s talking about the place that Pebblestar told us to go.”

“You don’t have to trust me,” Spark meowed. “You just have to follow me.”

“But why, Spark, should I follow someone I don’t trust?” Willowstorm demanded.

Spark purred. “You are truly wise, Willowstorm. There may be hope for you ever yet. The one who trusts any cat is as blind as a newborn kit. Trust is a thing only for a fool. Trust only in yourself and rely on your own instincts. It’s the only way to survive.”

Minnowstream couldn’t believe what the ginger rogue was saying. *Trust is not only for a fool!*

Willowstorm shook her head. “I refuse to listen to that nonsense. I will always trust my sister, no matter what she does.”

Spark sighed. “Oh, Willowstorm, when you have suffered and seen as much in this cruel world as I have, you will never trust anybody. The ones closest to your heart will always betray you.”

“Just stop!” Willowstorm’s glare was directed at Minnowstream this time, as if she had caused Spark’s beliefs. “Just give me one reason why the Clan should follow you?”

Spark lifted his eyes to the stars that were just beginning to appear in the night sky. “As surely as these stars shine, this will not be the River’s End.”

The River’s End…does he mean this will not be RiverClan’s *end?*

For days afterward, the words that followed would echo through Minnowstream’s mind. *Every end is merely a beginning disguised. From now on, your Clan will follow a new path. This moment right here is the dawn of a new age, Willowstorm. I will lead you to the river, and then it is up to you to make sure that this Clan of cats shall never fade away.*

A/N: Guess what starts next chapter? The journey to the valley!

If you haven't read Bubblybluebananas books yet, they are awesome! She is an extremely gifted writer whom I'm proud to say I have the privilege of working with again. If you don't read her books, I will be very sad and you don't want that xD

Anyhow, please comment with your thoughts and I hope you enjoyed!

Chapter 12

Chapter 12

Minnowstream was having difficulty sleeping the night before the journey resumed. She was trapped within a horrible nightmare.

In the dream, Ratpaw's gray fur was coated with blood. Deep clawmarks were gouged in his back. A brown dog chased after him, foaming at the mouth and its high-pitched yelps filling the air . "Minnowstream, help me!"

His screams for help echoed through her mind, yet though she wanted to attack the dog she couldn't move. Her feet seemed to have their own plans, and stayed firmly rooted to the ground. She closed her eyes for a mere heartbeat, but Ratpaw's body was ripped apart by the time she opened them again. His leg had been completely ripped off of his body, his head was twisted at an unnatural angle, and she could see the teethmarks on his throat. The dog gave a bark of triumph, and dashed off. She blinked in disbelief and shock as it vanished into the horizon.

Minnowstream could finally move, and she went and crouched beside her son. "No....oh, Ratpaw, I'm so sorry..."

Why? WHY!

She woke with a start. Sunlight was filtering through the roots of the oak tree. Streamwhisker was no longer curled around her, and she guessed that he was already awake. Littlepaw was still there. Her son twitched in his sleep and his soft breaths reached her ears.

The dream was still fresh in her mind. Although it had been over a half-moon since Ratpaw's death, her heart was still troubled and grief lingered. Sorrow filled her anew. It felt like she had seen her son die again.

She managed to put aside her sadness somehow as she padded out

into the clearing. Clover had given birth to three healthy kits eight sunrises ago. Mintkit was pretty quiet for a kit, and had jet black fur. Minnowstream was amused by how she looked like the exact opposite of her mother.

Mintkit's brothers, Tigerkit and Frogkit, were troublemakers from the moment they opened their eyes. The two had decided it was a great idea to wake every cat in the camp in the middle of the night by yelling, "We're under attack!"

Minnowstream would admit it; she panicked along with the rest of the Clan when she heard that. She guessed it was Beetle and that perhaps the black-and-white tom had come to take his revenge out on her precious Clan. When she found out it was joke, she was barely able to stop herself from clawing those two furballs to death.

Despite the fact that they had frightened the whole Clan, their cuteness kept them from punishment. They got away with nothing more than a scolding from Minnowstream and a lecture from Clover.

The traveling cats were supposed to leave at sunhigh. Spark paced back and forth in anticipation of the journey.

The ginger rogue had been a great help to the traveling cats. If he hadn't patiently hunted for them every day, they may have starved to death.

Spark walked over to her. "There's fresh-kill in the center of the clearing. I caught a thrush and a squirrel."

Minnowstream shook her head. "Thank you, Spark, but I will let my Clan eat first."

"No." Spark glanced over his shoulder at the prey. "I may not be able to find food in Twolegplace. Eat."

"What are you, the Clan leader?" she grumbled, but obediently selected the squirrel and carried it back to her den to share with Littlepaw.

They left right on time at sunhigh. Clover had chosen to go with

then and right before they left the forest, Minnowstream gave her a new name, Cloverleaf. All of the warriors had agreed to help carry the white-furred she-cat's kits.

"Hey!" Tigerkit protested as Dawnheart grabbed him by the scruff. "Put me down! All of the warriors are walking by themselves!"

Dawnheart purred. "You're not a warrior yet, dear."

Tigerkit pouted. "But Crowkit and Emberkit don't have to be carried and they aren't warriors!"

"They're six moons old. You aren't, Tigerkit!"

"Yes, I am! Dawnheart!"

"Why don't you just stop protesting? You know that I'm not going to put you down!"

"MOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMYYYYY!" Tigerkit wailed. "Tell Dawnheart to put me down!"

Cloverleaf sighed. "Tigerkit, that's enough."

The traveling cats trekked out of the forest in a much better mood than they entered it.

Spark led them along the winding Thunderpath. The occasional monster breezed by, and due to Ratpaw's death, every cat made sure to stay far away from the path.

***

It was at sundown, as the sun was shedding its final rays and the moon ascended into the night sky. A tangled clump of Twoleg structures came into sight. These nest were made of stone, and some of the stone was in colors that Minnowstream had never seen rocks in before. Harsh yellow light shone through a clear part in each of the dens, and inside a few, the silhouettes of Twolegs stumbled around. Minnowstream winced at the noise coming from the Twolegplace, wondering how kittypets could tolerate it.

Spark seemed at ease, and he was clearly the only one who felt that way. The traveling cats flinched at every sound and continually scanned the area.

Minnowstream whirled around as barking came from her right. A small black-and-white mutt yapped with excitement from behind a fence.

"Ignore it," Spark meowed. "It can't escape."

Spark turned into a narrow passageway between two tall Twoleg dens made of dark red stones. When they emerged, they found a monster sleeping at the back of the den.

Wooden fences surrounded most of the dens. Minnowstream didn't know which way they'd come from and they'd only just started into Twolegplace.

I sure hope Spark really knows where he's going....

A/N: Crazyheart returns next chapter! Please comment, as always I hope you guys enjoyed!

Chapter 13

Chapter 13

Whitepaw was really starting to annoy Crazyheart.

“Whitepaw, we’re leaving the ShadowClan camp now.”

“I don’t care!”

“Hey, Oakstar doesn’t want us to stay here forever. We’re on a mission to bring fresh-kill to RiverClan, Whitepaw.”

“I don’t care!”

“Whitepaw, your mother died.”

“I DON’T CARE!”

Crazyheart rolled her eyes. “Fine, just please stay here and rot in the mud. Starve to death, see if I give a mouse-tail.”

“I DON’T CARE!”

Oakstar had chosen Redfeather and his apprentice, Rainpaw, to come with the ThunderClan cats. The dark brown tabby warned Crazyheart that things were tense between RiverClan and WindClan. He told her that if they wanted to keep Fernstar and her Clan as their allies, then they probably should avoid being spotted by a WindClan patrol. The ShadowClan leader claimed that Fernstar was hoping RiverClan would starve to death so that WindClan could have more territory; if she saw her allies helping them, things wouldn’t be pleasant.

Redfeather led the way out of camp, his glossy reddish-brown fur ruffled slightly by the soft breeze. His apprentice followed at his side, like a silvery shadow. Crazyheart padded after him and Blazeheart quickened her pace to catch up to the ThunderClan deputy. Sorrelfur and Moonstripe were close behind,

chatting to each other.

"I wonder why ShadowClan is actually being helpful for a change," Moonstripe hissed.

Sorrelfur sighed. "Oakstar isn't as fox-hearted as the rest of his Clan. Don't judge a cat by his Clan."

"Or *her* Clan." Moonstripe's voice was teasing.

Crazyheart looked over her shoulder to see Sorrelfur give Moonstripe a playful shove. "You're impossible. We're leaving you behind here to eat frogs with ShadowClan!"

Whitepaw trailed way behind the others, dragging her paws and sulking the whole time. Crazyheart kept looking over her shoulder to make sure the white-furred apprentice was still there. If she strained her ears, she could hear the apprentice grumbling about how boring the mission was and how RiverClan were unimportant if they couldn't even feed themselves. *I don't know why I even check to see if she's still behind us though. It would be better for every cat if she just disappeared and was never seen again.*

Crazyheart looked at her sister. "I have the worst apprentice ever."

The pale ginger she-cat rolled her eyes. "You complain about her almost as much as she complains about warrior duties!"

"I do not!" Crazyheart protested. "I just state the facts!"

Blazeheart chuckled. "If you say so."

Crazyheart looked at the ground. "I do say so!"

Redfeather and Rainpaw were much quieter than the ThunderClan cats. In fact, neither cat even said a word. *I wonder why ShadowClan are so…unwilling to talk to the other Clans. It makes them seem so arrogant. Well, I guess we're not talking to them either, but at least we're talking to each other and we like each other. Whitepaw was not included in that last statement. Anyhow, maybe I should try to talk to them.*

Crazyheart ran to catch up with the ShadowClan cats. “Hey.”

“Hey,” Redfeather grumbled.

“I don’t remember the border being this close,” Crazyheart commented as the pungent odor of RiverClan filled her nostrils.

Redfeather didn’t look up. “We gave them this land to help them out a bit. The territory they had left couldn’t have supported a mouse, let alone a Clan of cats.”

Crazyheart was surprised. “Why would you do that?”

Redfeather stopped walking to look at the gray-furred she-cat. “ShadowClan isn’t as heartless as the other Clans say we are. And don’t think we don’t know what you all whisper about us behind our backs. You do realize, I hope, that we have ears as well as claws and we know how to use both of them.”

The ShadowClan cats kept walking and crossed over the border into the pines on the other side. They didn’t even look back to see if the ThunderClan cats followed them or not.

“Hey, wait!” Moonstripe yowled. “Maybe we should wait here for a border patrol to come?”

Redfeather padded onwards. “They don’t patrol their borders very often anymore, at least not the ShadowClan border. I know they have to check the WindClan border; Fernstar would take all their land in a heartbeat if they didn’t. Besides, I don’t think Pebblestar will mind if ShadowClan pays him a visit. I doubt even the arrogant Pebblestar would have the audacity to act hostile towards us after we just helped his Clan. Now, we’ve wasted enough time chatting. Are you coming or not?”

Crazyheart was uneasy about trespassing on another Clan’s territory without permission, but she didn’t want to seem cowardly in front of the ShadowClan cats so she stepped across the scent line. “C’mon, Moonstripe, Sorrelfur, let’s just go. Redfeather’s right anyways. We’re going to help them so it’s more than okay for us not to feel like waiting for a nonexistent border patrol.”

“So we’re just going to stroll right into the middle of their camp and say, ‘Hi everyone! How are you doing? We just decided to come into the heart of your territory without your permission!’” Moonstripe meowed sarcastically. “‘Please don’t be angry, we only kind of violated the warrior code! But that’s okay, StarClan told our medicine cat that ThunderClan is exempt from following it ‘cause we’re so special!’”

Crazyheart feigned innocence. “I’m sorry, was that sarcasm, Moon—”

“Stroll into the middle of their camp,” Redfeather muttered. “That would imply that they have one.”

Every cat, Whitepaw included, was silent after that remark. The ThunderClan cats wordlessly crossed the border and followed the ShadowClan cats.

A skinny golden-brown tom blocked their path. Crazyheart was well aware of his ribs, easily visible through the matted, unkempt fur that covered them. Lionpelt’s eyes were dull from hunger, and he seemed painfully thin. His legs shook as he didn’t have the strength to stand. This once proud, well-fed tom had withered to this corpse of a cat, a half-dead skeleton. Crazyheart felt guilty that she wasn’t suffering too, that she could eat all the fresh-kill that she needed or wanted.

“R-redfeather, why…why are you here?” Lionpelt’s voice had grown weaker overnight, and his voice shook with every word. “H-have you br-brought this…feast…to t-taunt us?”

Crazyheart stepped forward. “No. Take us to speak with Pebblestar and you can have all of it.”

A cough racked his body. “A-all of…of it? C-come then. W-we are…d-desperate…”

The thing that worried Crazyheart the most is that Lionpelt hadn’t even hesitated a single heartbeat before allowing enemy warriors from two Clans into his camp. *All we even had to do was offer them food…*

A/N: I'm so sorry I'm a terrible person I haven't updated for a whole month! It's completely inexcuseable but I'm going to make it up to you guys by posting Chapter 14 tomorrow! :) Thanks for reading, please share your thoughts with me in the comments! Hope you enjoyed!

Chapter 14

Chapter 14

Crazyheart was guided into a small area that RiverClan had turned into a makeshift camp. A thin Reedstream trotted by and gave them a questioning look, but said nothing. There was a gap large enough for a cat to squeeze through in the roots of one tree. Inside, Tigerstep looked up from where she was sorting herbs and stared at the visitors, then returned to her duties. Some cats couldn't even be bothered to give the ShadowClan and ThunderClan guests any attention at all, and the few who did were mostly eyeing the fresh-kill they had with jealousy. Crazyheart saw an apprentice named Deerpaw looking as if she was about to snatch it out of their jaws.

She recognized the Fallen Oak with its rotting bark. The tree had toppled over last leaf-bare in a storm with particularly strong gusts of wind and now leaned heavily against another oak. The tree had been coined the Fallen Oak and all four Clans now knew about the tree's history after Pebblestar reported it at a Gathering. The Fallen Oak and the other tree which supported it created a small shady area which it appeared that RiverClan were using as the warriors den. Then, Crazyheart noted Deerpaw pad into the den as well. *I guess the warriors and apprentices are sharing that tiny area. Poor RiverClan.*

Crazyheart noticed crude, uncomfortable-looking nests made of bracken on the ground of the warriors/apprentices den. "You aren't using moss?"

Lionpelt shook his head. "We don't have enough and we're saving what we have for Silverstream in the nursery because she is expecting kits."

As Crazyheart was about to reply, Whitepaw pointed with her paw towards Tigerstep, clearly having scented the herbs, and asked, "Is that the medicine cat?"

“No, it’s a flying hedgehog,” Crazyheart said, thoroughly annoyed with the white-furred she-cat.

Whitepaw scampered off. “Hey! Do you have an apprentice?”

Crazyheart rolled her eyes and returned her attention back to Lionpelt. “We can bring you some moss if you want.”

“No, that’s fine,” Lionpelt meowed. “We’re just grateful that you and ShadowClan brought us food. We can’t thank you enough.”

Crazyheart looked for a place to put her thrush. “No problem. Where’s the fresh-kill pile?”

Lionpelt looked embarrassed. “We don’t exactly have one since we can’t catch anything…”

“It’s fine.” Crazyheart went and put her thrush in the center of the camp, watching as the other ThunderClan cats followed her example.

A scrawny gray tom staggered into camp. “What are THEY doing here?”

Crazyheart dipped her head respectfully even though she knew Pebblestar couldn’t drive them out if he wanted to, considering that they probably couldn’t hurt a mouse in their current state. “We brought food to help RiverClan out. We may be enemies on the battlefield, but no Clan wants to see another starve.”

“Tell that to Fernstar,” Pebblestar muttered. “I’m sure WindClan would *celebrate* if we all just died of starvation.”

He’s right. Fernstar only cares about herself. I hate her so much. I wish Flamestar would just break our stupid alliance with that fox-hearted Clan. We don’t need WindClan for anything.

Crazyheart shot a glance in the direction of the new fresh-kill pile as Redfeather and Rainpaw dropped their offerings as well. “We put the prey over there if it’s okay…”

Pebblestar followed her gaze and his eyes bulged as they stopped on the fresh-kill pile. “Wow…just wow. RiverClan is forever indebted to both of your Clans and we can never thank you enough.”

Redfeather gave a formal nod. “No problem. Just don’t think it means ShadowClan is weak.”

“How can we ever repay you?” Suddenly, Pebblestar’s eyes darkened. “Wait…of course. You want something from us in return! We don’t have anything to give you. Leave, and take your worthless fresh-kill with you!”

Rainpaw narrowed his eyes. “Good riddance, you mangy…”

Redfeather cuffed him on the head. “Ignore my apprentice.”

“There’s nothing we want from,” Crazyheart told the RiverClan leader. “Both of our Clans just wanted to help.”

Pebblestar studied them for a moment. “Very well. We will never forget this. We give both of your Clans our best wishes.”

Crazyheart prepared to leave, knowing that the RiverClan leader didn’t really want them to stay any longer. “May StarClan light your path!”

“StarClan is dead as far as RiverClan is concerned,” Pebblestar hissed as he slunk off.

Redfeather and Crazyheart exchanged glances. *Pebblestar… how can he lose his faith in StarClan? But…if ThunderClan was slowly starving to death, would I lose my trust in them too? I’m not sure.*

Whitepaw bounced excitedly out of the medicine cat den, eyes as bright as if she had just been given infinite fresh-kill courtesy of StarClan. “Oh my StarClan, oh my great StarClan! Crazyheart, guess what?”

Crazyheart sighed, knowing she would regret asking. “What?

“RiverClan doesn’t have a medicine cat apprentice!” she screeched in Crazyheart’s ear.

Crazyheart rolled her eyes. *Some things never change.*

A/N: I know it's shorter than usual but I needed to update! My computer wasn't working for about a week or two weeks and then when I got it back I had lost the two chapters I wrote that I was going to update with...

Well, I've re-written both of them now! Once I get two comments I'll upload the next one! :) Sorry for being that pushy author that forces you to comment but I really love hearing your feedback! Thanks for reading hope you enjoyed!

Chapter 15

Chapter 15

The ShadowClan cats chose to take a different route back to their camp, so the two groups parted way. Crazyheart led her cats back to stone hollow without any major occurrences, but it was still late at night when they arrived at their home.

Even though it was nearly moonhigh, Flamestar was still waiting for them by the thorn tunnel. "Well? How bad are RiverClan's conditions?"

Crazyheart grimaced. "Bad. If ShadowClan hadn't given them land, their territory would be only slightly larger than the training hollow. Redfeather told me they felt sorry for RiverClan."

"ShadowClan? Redfeather?" Flamestar's eyes widened. "How did Redfeather tell you? You mean at the Gathering yesterday? Why didn't you tell me this last night?"

Crazyheart shook her head. "No, I mean we kinda sorta bumped into a ShadowClan border patrol and Oakstar sent Redfeather and Rainpaw to help RiverClan too. I asked Redfeather about why the border was so close and he told me that ShadowClan gave RiverClan some land to help them out."

Flamestar nodded. "Oakstar is the closest thing to a decent cat that has ever been born in ShadowClan. Well, I just wanted to hear how things were in RiverClan; I admit I'm a bit worried about them. Go get some rest, Crazyheart."

Crazyheart padded into the warriors den and drifted into a dreamless sleep. The next thing she knew, she was opening her eyes the next morning to sun filtering into the warriors den. She groaned and rose to her paws.

After organizing patrols, the deputy poked her nose in the

apprentices den. Whitepaw was the only one in there, per usual, as the other apprentices had already woken up because were eager to train and learn something from their mentors that would help them to be a better warrior. But Crazyheart's apprentice could care less about battle skills or hunting techniques. Instead, she wanted to pout over not being a medicine cat apprentice.

Crazyheart sighed inwardly, knowing her apprentice would be uncooperative. "Whitepaw! Get up! It's time to train!"

She was shocked when her apprentice immediately sprang to her paws, eyes sparkling with excitement. "Are we going to see RiverClan again?"

"What? No!" Crazyheart was confused. "Why would you *want* to go visit RiverClan again? Yesterday, all you did was complain about it!"

Whitepaw looked at Crazyheart as if it should be obvious. "Tigerstep doesn't have an apprentice."

Crazyheart rolled her eyes in disgust. "We're going to the training hollow, and even though I know you're a hopeless cause I'm still going to try to teach you how to sidestep."

Whitepaw dragged her paws the whole way there, but Crazyheart tried to ignore her ceaseless grumbling. *Whitepaw isn't here, Whitepaw isn't here, Whitepaw isn't here, Whitepaw isn't...OH MY STARCLAN WILL SHE EVER SHUT UP?!*

They finally arrived and Crazyheart told Whitepaw to stay where she was standing. "Now I'm going to charge at you and I want you to slide off to one side at the last moment, okay?"

Whitepaw actually obeyed for once, but she made a point of looking bored. "Well, hurry up and get this over with."

Crazyheart gritted her teeth. "Remember, step off to the side at the last moment so your enemy doesn't..."

Whitepaw yawned loudly. "I've been here so long I think I'm an elder now."

Seething with fury, Crazyheart sprinted towards Whitepaw, taking long strides and lowering her head. The apprentice just sat down and began calmly licking a forepaw. The ThunderClan deputy barreled into the white-furred she-cat, sending her tumbling to the ground.

Crazyheart unsheathed her claws and swiped them across Whitepaw's side. "This is for being a disrespectful, worthless apprentice."

Crazyheart raked her claws down her cheek. "This is for never listening and always complaining and..."

Whitepaw scrambled to her paws and took a few steps back. "Good riddance! I'm never coming back!"

"Please don't!" Crazyheart snarled.

Whitepaw dashed off and the undergrowth swallowed her up. *I wonder how to explain this to her mother...my sister.*

Roseleaf and Breezewhisker were eating outside near the elders den, sharing a thrush. *They spend way too much time together.*

Roseleaf noticed Crazyheart's entry and looked up. "Hey, Crazyheart. Where's Whitepaw?"

Crazyheart shifted on her paws, looking at the ground. "Well, she kind of just ran off because she told me she was sick of being a warrior and..."

"What?" Breezewhisker and Roseleaf screeched in unison.

Crazyheart sighed. "Perhaps it's best for everyone that she left. After all, you and I both know she would never be happy here, seeing as she can't find one positive thing in the whole Clan."

"Besides, we don't need a worthless mouth to feed. Good riddance, I say." Blazeheart, blunt as always, had drifted over after hearing the conversation.

Breezewhisker glared at Blazeheart while Roseleaf just seemed to be

in shock.

The rest of the day passed slowly. Breezewhisker and Roseleaf were pretty much ignoring Blazeheart, but they didn't have much to say to Crazyheart either. *It is probably a good thing that's she's gone. I don't know why they're upset.*

Crazyheart had a weird dream that night, and she wondered what it meant.

Lionpelt was standing beside Pebblestar, looking worried. "Pebblestar, we should leave, quickly! They'll slaughter us in a heartbeat!"

Pebblestar glanced at him. "I will fight to my last breath. We will NEVER retreat. RiverClan, attack!"

A voice whispered, Fern will face three. Two can save the third, but the third will leave. Fern will cause four to become three.

She woke with a jolt. *Is Fern Fernstar or would that be too obvious?*

A/N: What do YOU think the prophecy means? Please tell me in the comments! :) Thanks for reading, hope you enjoyed!

Chapter 16

Chapter 16

Crazyheart was surprised to see Fernstar arrive near sunhigh after the reception she had received the last time. The WindClan leader just didn't seem to realize that ThunderClan did not appreciate her presence.

Fernstar immediately spotted Crazyheart and padded over. "Where's Flamestar?"

In his den, trying to rest.

"He's out hunting," Crazyheart lied. "He won't be back for a while. Why don't you just head on back to your camp, I mean, there's no sense in waiting, is there?"

Fernstar clearly didn't get the hint, because she sat down on the ground instead of leaving the stone hollow. "I have time. I can wait."

Crazyheart gritted her teeth. *I am so tempted to rake my claw's across that pathetic she-cat's face. Perhaps that will stop her visits. ThunderClan owes absolutely nothing to WindClan, and it's time that she realizes it.*

Of course, now was the time that Flamestar had to leave his den. Fernstar glared at Crazyheart, and then feigned a look of hurt, as if Crazyheart's lie had actually harmed her. Crazyheart rolled her eyes and waited to see what her father would do. *Please, Flamestar, force her just to leave now! Show her that she can't just stroll right into the middle of camp whenever she wants to, regardless of how "important" her message is!*

Flamestar sighed. "Fernstar, you do not have the right to travel on our territory wherever and whenever you like without our permission."

"But Flamestar, this is urgent!" Fernstar whined, sounding like a kit that had been told for the first time that they couldn't leave the camp until they were six moons old.

"Make it fast." Flamestar paced back and forth, as if to express his impatience.

Fernstar leapt to her feet, her eyes blazing with fury. "Flamestar, RiverClan drove out their elders! Would you like to know how I know that? Because they showed up at my camp begging for me to let them stay! Cherrystorm almost didn't even make it to my camp! There's no way that a cat that old should have to walk that far!"

WHAT?! Is this actually true or was the story exaggerated? Why would Pebblestar drive out the elders? Has he gone rogue and completely abandoned the code?

Crazyheart made sure that she kept her expression carefully neutral. "And? Did you let them stay?"

Fernstar looked offended, as if Crazyheart had violated some rule by asking her that. "Of course we did! WindClan could never turn away helpless elders who can't fend for themselves."

"Do you know why Pebblestar would do that?" Crazyheart studied the WindClan leader's expression, and unfortunately, she looked like she was telling the truth.

Fernstar shook her head. "You never know what a fox-heart like Pebblestar's motives would be."

"Why did you come here to tell us about this?" Flamestar narrowed his eyes. "And what does it have to do with ThunderClan?"

"WindClan has decided that it is not wise or safe for their to be a Clan around the lake that no longer respects StarClan or follows the warrior code. If they drive out their elders, then they deserve to be driven out themselves. Tomorrow, at sunhigh, WindClan will attack the RiverClan camp. We would like our allies to send two battle patrols to help us. And by our allies, we mean ThunderClan," Fernstar said. "Surely you haven't forgotten how WindClan helped

you when Ivystar attacked."

Flamestar, please say no! I'm sure Pebblestar had good reasons for driving out the elders, if he even did. Besides, we don't owe WindClan anything for something that happened moons ago.

Flamestar looked at her, directly in the eyes. "This is not ThunderClan's fight. We will not risk our warriors lives over such trivial matters, especially ones that we cannot be sure are even true at all."

"It's true!" Fernstar insisted. "You know it's true! You know what Pebblestar is like! A tabby can't change his stripes!"

Flamestar began forcefully pushing the WindClan leader towards the camp entrance. "You're most certainly right about that last part. You would know better than most."

"We will see you at the RiverClan camp tomorrow at sunhigh!" Fernstar yowled.

Yes, you will see me there. But I will not be fighting on your side.

A/N: Sorry for the long time with no update, I have been mainly focusing on the WBI(Warriors: Bumblestripe's Insanity) series! If you haven't read it, I hope you check it out WBI is definitely my favorite book I've ever written, as well as what I believe to be the best one. Please comment, I hope you enjoyed the chapter!